Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A plasma etching apparatus comprising a chuck for retaining a substrate and hardware that is formed of a material that includes oxygen impregnated therein such that said oxygen is released when an etching operation is carried out.

2. (Original) The plasma etching apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said chuck is substantially circular and said hardware comprises a focus ring that peripherally surrounds said chuck.

3. (Original) The plasma etching apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said chuck is substantially circular and said hardware comprises a focus ring that is annular in shape and at least a portion of said focus ring substantially continuously extends below a peripheral portion of said chuck.

4. (Original) The plasma etching apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said chuck comprises an electrostatic chuck.

5. (Original) The plasma etching apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said hardware comprises a focus ring composed primarily of quartz.

6. (Original) The plasma etching apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said hardware comprises a focus ring formed of a ceramic.

7. (Original) The plasma etching apparatus as in claim 2, further comprising a further focus ring, said focus ring and said further focus ring forming a focus ring set that peripherally surrounds said chuck.

8. (Currently Amended) A plasma etching apparatus comprising a chuck for retaining a substrate and a focus ring, at least one of said chuck and said focus ring formed of a material that includes ~~including~~ oxygen therein such that said oxygen is released when an etching operation is carried out.

9. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The plasma etching apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said hardware comprises a focus ring and further comprising ~~an etch chamber including therein a focus ring and a chuck for retaining a substrate,~~ said focus ring maintainable at a temperature no greater than a temperature of said substrate while an etching operation is carried out upon said substrate.

10. (Original) The plasma etching apparatus as in claim 9, wherein said chuck comprises an electrostatic chuck and said substrate comprises a semiconductor substrate.

11. (Original) The plasma etching apparatus as in claim 9, wherein said focus ring maintains contact with said electrostatic chuck and said electrostatic chuck is cooled during said etching operation.

12. (Original) The plasma etching apparatus as in claim 11, wherein said focus ring is disposed peripherally around said substrate and includes a portion that rests on an annular landing section of electrostatic chuck.

13-28. (Cancelled)

29. (New) A plasma etching apparatus comprising a chuck for retaining a substrate and a focus ring peripherally surrounding said chuck and formed of a focus ring material that includes oxygen throughout the focus ring material, such that said oxygen is released when an etching operation is carried out.

30. (New) A plasma etching apparatus comprising a chuck for retaining a substrate and formed of an oxygen-impregnated material, and a focus ring peripherally surrounding said chuck.

32. (New) The plasma etching apparatus as in claim 30, wherein said chuck comprises an electrostatic chuck.

32. (New) The plasma etching apparatus as in claim 31, wherein said chuck is disposed within an etching chamber and further comprising said etching chamber containing therein further hardware formed of said oxygen-impregnated material.

33. (New) A plasma etching apparatus comprising a chuck for retaining a substrate and a focus ring peripherally surrounding said chuck and formed of a focus ring material that includes oxygen throughout the focus ring material, such that said oxygen is released when an etching operation is carried out, the focus ring maintainable at a temperature no greater than a temperature of said substrate while said etching operation is carried out upon said substrate.